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Statement by Mike Mansfield

Mike Mansfield 1903-2001

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When asked for his reaction to Senator Murray's announcement,

Senator Mansfield stated that his position was as he had previously announced, and that was that if Senator Murray had been a candidate for re-election, he would give him his full support and that as far as Congressman Lee Metcalf was concerned, he had stated that both in Montana and in Washington, in his opinion Metcalf was the best Congressman Montana has ever had.

When Senator Murray made his announcement that he would run for re-election, Senator Mansfield made the following statement:

"I have worked closely with Senator Murray for the past 18 years in Congress, and very closely over the past seven years in the Senate.

"We have always worked together in behalf of what we considered the best interests of Montana and the nation. He has been a loyal and true friend. I will support him to the best of my ability."

When Congressman Lee Metcalf announced that he would run for the Senate, Senator Mansfield made the following statement:

"I am sure that Congressman Metcalf had a difficult time making his decision as to what office he would run for. As I have said many times, both in Montana and in Washington, he is the best Congressman ever to come out of Montana. Before making his decision, he did inform Senator Murray and me that he had this matter under consideration.

"My statement when Senator Murray announced still holds--that I will support him to the very best of my ability."

Continuing, Senator Mansfield said that during the time he had been an active member of the Democratic Party and an elected representative of the people of Montana, he had always felt, with

one exception, that public endorsement of private candidates was unwise and detrimental to party solidarity. "The voters of Montana," he continued, "are highly intelligent people and they can and will select their candidates on the basis of their record. This is the only way they should be judged."

While every Montanan has a right to express his or her opinion, the final decision will be up to the people as a whole.

I have stated my personal opinion. It is up to everyone else to act as he thinks best in the complicated basis which will confront the Democrats during the primary. What the people of Montana do is their responsibility. The decision as to who will be nominated is not for me to make but one the people of Montana will have to make on the basis of their own good judgment and on the basis of the responsibility which is theirs.

In conclusion, the Senator stated "the people of Montana are entitled to and will make their own choice based on their own judgment and I am sure with the interest of our state at heart."